

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 10142

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SUBJECT FONMIN LIEVANO COMMENTS ON QUITO CONFERENCE

BEGIN SUMMARY: IN RECENT STATEMENTS FONMIN LIEVANO HAS ASSUMED A SOMEWHAT MORE EVEN TEMPERED POSITION WITH REGARD TO THE OUTCOME OF THE QUITO CONFERENCE, THE POSITION OF TH US AT QUITO AND THE OAS.HE INDICATED NEW FOREIGN POLICY STATEMENTS MAY BE FORTHCOMING SHORTLY. END SUMMARY.

1) LIEVANO IN A PRESS CONFERENCEON NOV 15 TERMED THE QUITO CONFERENCE A "NOTEWORTHY STEP AHEAD IN ESTABLISHING BEFORE THE CONTINENT THAT THERE IS NO SOLID BASIS FOR MAINTAINING SACTIONS AGAINST CUBA". MAINTAINING THAT THE QUITO CONFERENCE WAS NOT A FAILURE LIEVANO EXPLAINED THAT ONE O F THE MORE IMPORTANT ASPECTS WHICH NEEDED TO BE CLARIFIED AND WHICH WAS IN EFFECT CLARIFIED, WAS THE POSITION OF THE MAJORITY OF THE COUNTRIES OF AMERICAN REGARDING THE PROBLEM OF CUBAN SACNTIONS. UNTIL 3 OR 4 YEARS AGO IT WAS VERY EASY TO OBTAIN A MAJORITY FOR THE SANCTIONS AND FURTHERMORE THESE MAJORITIES WERE OBTAINED WITH PROUD AND FRANK VOTES AGAINST RAISING THE SANCTIONS. IN THIS CONFERENCE THE PROFOUND

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CHANGEWITH RESPECT TO CUBA HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED. THERE

WAS A MAJORITY IN FAVOR OF LIFTING THE SANCTIONS AND A NUMBER OF VOTES, NO LONGER PROUD AS ON OTHER OCCASIONS, THAT OPPOSED THE LIFTING OF SANCTIONS AND NOW DISGUISED AS VOTES OF ABSTENTION. I BELIEVE IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO HAVE FORMALLY ESTABLISHED AT THIS CONFERENCE THAT THE CLEAR MAJORITY OF LATIN AMERICAN STATES DO NOT SUPPORT THE MAINTENANCE OF SANCTIONS. THIS IS A SITUATION WHICH EVIDENTLY IS GOING TO HAVE LOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS".

2) ASKED IF COLOMBIA WILL RENEW UNILATERALLY ITS RELATIONS WITH CUBA, LIEVANO REPLIED "I CANNOT GIVE YOU CONCRETE OPINION ON THIS AT THE MOMENT. IT WILL BE THE SUBJECT OF A DECISION BY THE GOVERNMENT FOLLOWING STUDY OF THE MATTER. BUT AFTER BEING ONE OF THE GOVERNMENTS WHICH PROPOSED THE LIFTING OF THE SANCTIONS THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT NATURALLY HAS NO INTEREST IN MAINTAINING THIS SITUATION INDEFINITELY, WHICH I BELIEVE TO BE VERY IRREGULAR, ESPECIALLY AFTER THE CONFERENCE".

3) REGARDING WHETHER THE US WOULD TAKE REPRISALS OVER THE RESULTS OF THE CONFERENCE, LIEVANO REPLIES EMPHATICALLY THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE SO, "FURTHERMORE", HE SAID, "THE CONDUCT OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION IN THIS CASE WAS PRUDENT AND I DOUBT THAT THEY ARE THINKING OF REPRISALS. OF COURSE I REGRET THAT THE POSITION OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION WAS NOT MORE POSITIVE IN THE SENSE OF AWARENESS OF NEW REALITIES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THAT WITH ITS ABSTENTION A CERTAIN STAGNATION WAS SHOWN IN US POLICY REGARDING LATIN AMERICA, DIFFERENT FROM US POLICY TO OTHER AREAS OF THE WORLD".

4) AS TO THE POSSIBILITY OF A MEETING WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER, WHICH HAS RECENTLY BEEN RUMORED IN THE BOGOTA PRESS LIEVANO REPLIED THAT SUCH MEETINGS ARE A NORMAL PART OF COLOMBIAN FOREIGN RELATIONS BUT THAT HE HAD NOT SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON THAT MATTER. "OF COURSE, WE MAINTAINED CONTACT WITH THE AMERICAN DELEGATION IN QUITO AND ALSO WITH THE EMBASSY BEFORE DEPARTING FOR QUITO. COLOMBIA IS CERTAINLY NOT IN A POSITION OF HOSTILITY REGARDING THE US GOVERNMENT AND WE MAY BE ABLE TO WORK TOGETHER IN MANY AREAS WITHIN THE GREATEST HARMONY. CONFIDENTIAL

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5) THE FONMIN REPLIED TO A QUESTION ABOUT A POSSIBLE TRIP BY HIM TO HAVANA, THAT THE MATTER HAD FIRST TO BE STUDIED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND WHEN A DECISION WAS REACHED HE WOULD MAKE IT KNOWN.

6) ASKED WHETHER THE OAS WAS ABOUT TO DISAPPEAR, TO BE

REPLACED BY ANOTHER ORGANIZATION, LIEVANO RESPONDED THAT THE VOTE WAS NOT AN OAS PROBLEM BUT ONE OF THE INTER AMERICAN MUTUAL ASSISTANCE TREATY, WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF WHICH THE SACTIONS WERE LAID DOWN". LIEVANO WENT ON TO CRITICIZE THE VOTING FORMULA WHICH REQUIRES A 2/3 VOTE TO LIFT THE SANCTIONS.

7) IN ANOTHER STATEMENT FOLLOWING A MEETING WITH PRESIDENT LOPEZ, LIEVANO SAID THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED THE QUITO CONFERENCE WITH THE PRESIDENT. WE ARE GOING TO STUDY AND WE ARE EXPECTING NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CONTINENT BECAUSE DESPITE WHAT PEOPLE BELIEVE THINGS DID NOT END AS THEY APPEARED TO HAVE ENDED IN QUITO. THE EFFECTS WILL BEGIN TO BE SEEN AND IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS WE WILL HAVE SOME ANNOUNCEMENTS TO MAKE OVER THE POLICY THAT WE ARE GOING TO ADOPT.

8) COMMENT: FOREIGN MINISTER LIEVANO HAS EVIDENTLY CALMED DOWN SOMEWHAT SINCE HIS RETURN FROM QUITO AND IS CLEARLY INTERESTED IN INTERPRETING THE OUTCOME OF THE CONFERENCE IN THE MOST FAVORABLE LIGHT. IT WOULD APPEAR INCREASINGLY LIKELY THAT COLOMBIAN WILL CONTINUE ITS CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN THE OAS. ANY FINAL DECISION REGARDING THE NATURE OF COLOMBIAN/CUBAN RELATIONS WILL BE MADE BY PRESIDENT LOPEZ FOLLOWING A DISPASSIONATE ANALYSIS OF THE DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL FACTORS INVOLVED. END COMMENT.

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